/113 cont./
Slaves (ata)

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Matthes translates the term ata by "slave," "servant," "subject." This translation is still correct, even today. When the Prince of Goa speaks of his ata, it must be determined from the context whether he means by that his slaves, his followers, or his subjects, or possibly even his noble confederates. If someone refers to himself as ata in relation to the Prince, this is a self-abasement which -- especially if an important person is involved -- /114/ frequently amounts to an excessive elevation of the Prince and thus, at the same time, of the speaker himself.

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It is as difficult to translate the concept ata with a single term as it is to describe someone's social status in fixed, known terms. A translation is only possible if the relationship of the speaker to the one whose ata he considers himself to be is clear. Ata indicates a relationship. A resident of kampong Pakatto who calls himself an ata (subject) of the Prince of Goa turns out to own an ata (slave) himself.

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Insofar as the term ata is translated by "slave," it appears that slaves belong to the highest social class. Friedericy reports that they were generally despised, but that court slaves occupied a privileged position compared to ordinary people (1). It seems that slaves cannot be placed in a fixed

1. H. J. Friedericy, Dissertation, p. 551.

social hierarchy. They do not form an integrated group, either. Each slave has individual ties with his master. Their position can merely be indicated by the relationship to their master.

The position of slaves in Makassarese-Buginese country does not give rise to strong sentiments. "Even

554 /210 cont./ latter case, a marriage may still take place.
684 Then there arises a relationship between "the people who feel siri'" and "the fleers," a relationship which opens up the /211/ possibility of circumventing the killing that is also prescribed in this case. Ultimately, though only after years, a reconciliation can come about. This entire complex will be discussed in the following part of this chapter.

Third Part

The Siri' Phenomenon

554 Vertical mobility occurs by means of opposition relation-
571 ships. Men between fifteen and forty years, and especially the younger ones among them, must face each other in a lasting relationship of challenge and outdoing. Each challenge and outdoing demands a reaction. The person who does not react, that is to say, the one who does not participate in what is regarded as important in this culture, has little social standing. The feeling of someone who is outdone is indicated by siri' (1). Someone is siri' when his social standing is

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1. Matthes (Woordenboek, p. 583) translates the word siri' by "ashamed, diffident, shy, shame, sense of honor, disgrace." But to a Makassarese, siri' has an entirely different meaning than these words have for a Dutchman. The meaning fits equally little that of the

554 /211 cont./ Indonesian word malu.
571 An attempt at definition
[114 will be made below. For
196] the sake of clarity, however, I have left the term untranslated in a number of cases.

impaired and when another person knows this.

A man is inclined to regard immediately as outdoing any accidental event at an encounter, or a lucky word on his part, by which he raises himself above the other person, at least in his own eyes. The other, when he hears this, is also siri'.

The reaction may consist of a counterchallenge, a returned insult, by which the original challenger in his turn becomes siri'. It is never possible to determine precisely who "began." The mutual opposition is sometimes explained by an event from the past that is regarded as of great importance, for instance, a murder. But with that the question concerning the origin of the mutual opposition is merely put off.

There exists the possibility that the outdone person will [578] respond by stabbing. The consequence of outdoing can therefore never be foreseen. It remains charged with real danger. Many stabbing brawls in South Celebes are proof of that.

554 /212/ One of the most spectacular challenges is the theft
571 of cattle, horses, or buffalo. Its purpose is, in the first instance,
685 to show one's courage (kaporeanna); only in a few cases are economic motives at the bottom of this. Sometimes a warning is uttered beforehand: "I am coming" (that is to say, "to [578] steal your buffalo"). Stealing cattle is done to find a reason for a brawl. A successful buffalo theft is considered a triumph and at the same time a challenge. A cattle theft at the expense of the prince is therefore a great insult.